

92. The Sin of Lying.

Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor; for we are members one of another. *Eph. 4, 25.*

A lie is a falsehood spread with the express intention to deceive. The false, lying tongue delights in the publication of false or reproving charges or in the denial and suppression of truth. Falsehood and truth can never mix. A lie, though apparently serviceable at times to avoid a loss or gain a present advantage, is always an abomination to God; and of all lies those are most despicable which aim to harm others by wilful misrepresentation of facts.

Falsehood, whether it be a miserable little lie which disturbs a neighborhood for a day, or one of those larger frauds which for a time fills the world, is sure to recoil on the head of the liar. "He that speaks lies shall not escape." In the Book of Revelation there is a list of those who shall be cast into a lake of fire, and the liar is among them.

Unbelieving and godless people generally lie whenever and wherever they find it convenient and to their advantage to do so. But should not a Christian abhor and hate all lying and dishonesty? Is not the devil, whose works he has renounced in Baptism, the father of lies? Should he not therefore shrink from lying as from an ugly serpent? Should not God's command be continually before him? Should he not fear and love God so as not deceitfully to belie his neighbor? We Christians should therefore practise strictest uprightness in all our dealings with our fellow-men. Not only should we shun all manifest falsehood, but also guard against trickery and deceitfulness. Christians are followers of Him who is the Truth. Let us always abide by the truth, then, and speak the truth and thus prove that we are true followers of our Master, who said: "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." It is not always easy to tell the truth, but it is always right and God pleasing to do so.

Prayer.

Come, O Holy Spirit, and enkindle us with the fire of Thy benign fervor, burn out all internal vileness, together with all falsehood, lying, and deceitfulness. And in order that we may serve our God with true earnestness and zeal, in fervency of faith and spirit, illumine us with the light of Thy truth. Thou hast said in Holy Writ: "Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile." All use of the tongue to the injury or offense of our neighbor Thou hast forbidden. Grant us grace to obey Thee. Amen.

O let me never speak
What bounds of truth exceedeth;
Grant that no idle word
From out my mouth proceedeth;
And grant when in my place
I must and ought to speak,
My words due power and grace,
Nor let me wound the weak.

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